

Brief Notes of a Sermon

By the late Rev ARCHIBALD COOK.

Preached in the North Church, Inverness, 24th March, 1838.

“And also all that generation were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” – Judges 2:10.

It is a precious thing to have the people of God amongst us or in the world. We are informed in the preceding passage that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived him. The next generation knew not the Lord. This was the fruit of ignorance of God and His works. A soul that knows not God must seek its sole contentment in the creature. We are bent on idols. Forms of God and of spiritual things in the mind were the original spring of all idolatry. The poor people of God will be brought home in safety notwithstanding all their trials.

I. – The people of God are a blessing wherever they are.

II. – It is a visible sign of judgment when the Lord has taken His own people away.

I. – The people of God are a blessing wherever they are.

1. They are a blessing on account of their spiritual union to the living Head. Without this union one cannot be a Christian. They are said to be “partakers of the divine nature.” The soul begins to act faith upon Christ, and becomes a living member of this mystical body. While a living member of Christ’s mystical body is on this earth there will be communion between earth and heaven through that person. The world knows them not, even as it “knew Him not,”

2. The people of God are a blessing on account of the secret, spiritual and unchangeable concern Christ has for them. They were the first objects of His love. They are represented as the apple of His eye, and as the excellent ones of the earth. He has such care for them, and such interest in them, that what is done against them He counts as done against Himself. On account of His concern about them, He will be letting down temporal blessings upon the earth while there is one of them in it. It is like as if a father had a child in another family, he would give presents to that family, not because he loved them, but because his child dwelt with them. It is on account of the children of God that temporal blessings come to this world.

3. The people of God are a blessing on account of their prayers. They are a praying people. They are represented in Scripture, as turning away judgments from the world by their prayers. The prayers and sighs and tears of a gracious soul have a great effect in the court of heaven.

4. They are a blessing, as they are represented as the salt of the earth, preserving the earth from putrefying in their lusts. . . . They are represented as the wonders of heaven and lights of the world. They are as candles in a dark place, through whom God preserves the true knowledge of Himself. It was once confined to one family.

5. The people of God are a blessing on account of their standing against floods of iniquity. They are represented as pillars. “I will make thee a pillar in the temple of my God.” There are some, no doubt, better pillars than others. . . . In the objects of His love there is a spirit of spiritual purity as pure as the very being of God. Were it not for the

people of God we would be falling down to stocks and stones like poor papists. Now, they are precious on this account. They are precious as standing against sin in their families.

6. The people of God are a blessing on account of the way in which they are the means of preserving the pure ordinances of the gospel in the world. Every soul will take the means most agreeable to his nature. Whenever any of God's children are in a means of grace, there is spiritual life in that ordinance. Many a struggle the people of God had since the beginning.

7. The people of God are a great blessing on account of their example. The example of a gracious soul is precious: hence we see the people follow the example of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him. Even graceless souls followed their example. There is something in the gracious soul that will put another in mind that he has a soul. What makes this world to shun the people of God? Because when they see them, their very appearance will bring something of eternity to their remembrance. The example of the people of God in their families is precious. . .

8. The people of God are a blessing on account of their advices. It was well there was an Eli that Samuel might speak to, when the Lord came to him ere he knew the Lord. Go to a mere professor of religion, he will put you wrong with regard to eternity, he was never taken out of the old covenant of works.

9. They are a blessing on account of their fellow-feeling and sympathy. We read of the apostle, how he "longed for them in the bowels of Christ." He became a partaker of the bowels of the Saviour. Go to the people of God with your trials, and you will see something of the bowels of the Saviour in them. Christ wept when He saw Jerusalem. Look at a poor believing woman who has a carnal worldly husband. I am sure she will have wet eyes for his soul before God. The nearer the people of God come to Him, the more fellow-feeling they will possess.

10. They are a blessing because they are the only beauty in the world. The king's daughter is all glorious within. Infinite wisdom has drawn a veil over the spiritual glory of the believer, the veil of his body. It is a mercy the Lord has covered this glory. I am sure if it was uncovered believers would become idolators, worshipping one another. There is something purer in the child of God than in the very angels. Their purity is created, but the purity of the believer is uncreated. Christ is made their sanctification. They also have the robe of Christ's righteousness. Carnal worldlings will scoff at God's people; but hereafter they will shine in a different light; kings and princes will say then, "Oh, that I were in your garment." Oh, how much is the parent honoured that has been the means of bringing one of the children of God into the world. O, graceless family that have a guard of devils always about them! When prisoners are long in prison, they are permitted to get an airing with generally a double guard about them. So when the people of the world go to church that they may get an airing, they have a double guard of devils about them. If the love of the world go with one to eternity, it will give that person the heart-burn for ever. The people of God are the diamonds that will shine in Christ's crown. They are companions who will walk with Him in white. . . .

There is not a lawful calling in the world but God has some child of His own in it: it is because of this that it prospers. The Lord fixes the time when the objects of His love are to be taken out of the world, when the poor soul shall be freed from trials and crosses. The world have their time fixed also, but the end is different. A person who lives for dying will die for living in everlasting enjoyment.

[November 1899]

Notes of a Sermon

By the Rev. JOHN MACLEOD, M.A., Ullapool.

“My yoke is easy” – Matthew 11:30.

The word is that of a king. His yoke tells of His rule on the one side and of those that are by Him ruled on the other. The Lord Jesus Christ is a king and as a king has His subjects. If we consider who He is in the light of the testimony of God’s Word we see that He is the Word that is God, by whom all things were made and for whom they were made. By Him all things consist and for Him they consist. As creator and sustainer of all things, all things are His by unchangeable right; but in this passage it is no mere creative kingly authority that is brought before us. The Mediator speaks and says, All things are delivered unto me of my Father. No man knoweth the Father save the Son and those to whom the Son is pleased to reveal Him. He quickeneth whom He wills to quicken, and this is eternal life, that we should know the Father and the Son. Seeing then the Father is known by none save by those to whom the Son is pleased to reveal Him, the Son is the dispenser of eternal life. Having power to bestow eternal life, in which there is rest for the weary soul of man, He issues His call to such as labour and are heavy laden, summons them to Himself and promises them rest. Christ the Prince of life speaks here and speaks as one who has claims. When His word is declared it demands acceptance as His, and no man can know the Father unless he knows the Son. The Son’s word declares His glory, and Christ claims to be received and honoured as He is revealed in that word. As Saviour, His name is Jesus for He saves from sin. He saves as an exalted Prince and Saviour and this is the yoke of His grace: that He should be honoured as the Father is. This claim meets all and sundry to whom the word of His gospel comes. Christ speaks as Mediator and as Saviour, and understanding these things of the character and capacity of the speaker let us consider –

- I. – His yoke. What is it?
- II. – How His yoke is assumed and worn.
- III. – How it comes to pass that His yoke is easy.

I. – Christ’s yoke. As He is a king His kingly claims are His yoke. He is a Prince and Saviour, exalted with gifts for the rebels, and His voice is to an unheeding and rebellious world, summoning them to receive of His gifts, that so He who has received gifts for rebels may receive His due meed of honour from rebels. The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, and Christ gives Himself in the gospel to sinners. This then enters into His yoke. It is His yoke of grace. He calls on all to assume it, for those who wear it not are not yokeless. They are under the yoke of sin and earn its wages which are death. When Christ thus calls on them to assume His yoke He calls on them to cast off the yoke of sin, but this can be done only by receiving Christ as our righteousness. Christ made a curse, received as our surety, delivers us from the curse and its wasting power. Apart from His satisfaction there is no hope of deliverance from the yoke of sin, but He has borne the curse and from its bosom has snatched the blessing of eternal life. In Him then, as our surety received by faith, there is hope of deliverance from the power and slavery of sin. There is the hope of being able to become servants of righteousness wearing the yoke of Jesus. This is the yoke of Christ, that we submit to be saved through His death and receive Him as our ruler and our life. Exalted with gifts for sinners He claims this honour at their hands, that casting away every other hope they receive Himself as their one hope, and thus glory in grace that reigns through

righteousness unto everlasting life. This is one aspect of Christ's yoke – the aspect that it presents to the world. Thus He calls on rebels to submit to His government – to His enthronement in their hearts and lives as their rightful king. Those who assume this yoke are delivered from the curse of the law. They are no longer under the law but under grace. But this does not mean that the bonds of moral obligation are in any wise loosened; for the yoke of Christ for those who submit to Him as their righteousness is that they live now, not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. He has not come to give licence to sin, He has not come to trample on the holiness of the moral law – nay, He has come to exalt it, to write it afresh on the heart of sinners, to win them to the love of it, and to increase their reasons for rendering loving obedience to its behests. Man is God's creature, and though he has lost God's likeness, yet God has not lost His claims for a revenue of glory at His creature's hands. Created to love God, man is still obliged to this love. Independently altogether of any promise of life for obedience, man is called on to love the Creator, and the ground of this claim is unchangeable as God Himself. He who claims His creature's love is all-worthy of the love He claims. He changes not and His all-worthiness of being loved changes not, so that though man has fallen away from God, as God's creature he is still bound to love God as He deserves to be loved. Whatever set of circumstances man is in this is His Creator's claim upon him and the quality of the love and obedience claimed is not other since man has fallen than it was ere he fell. There has been no abatement of the standard of perfection. Take man even in the place of woe. View him as God's creature, fallen he is, yet still he is God's creature, and this love is as obligatory on him as ever it was. If this is so, when Christ came to redeem from the curse of the law and so frees His people from the law and brings them under the sway of grace, the matter of eternally binding moral obligation is altogether untouched. Christ came to restore, and in restoring man to his high state of favour with God He makes him a new creature and enables him, after the inward man, to love the law of God. Instead of loosening man's obligation to love God, He but increases it; for those who are in Christ reconciled to God, and new creatures are under obligation, not alone to love God as their Creator, Lawgiver, and Judge, but also to love Him as the God of their salvation. This then enters into the yoke of Christ that all His subjects are bound to observe His law.

In connection with the rule of their obedience, we may notice in the types of the Old Testament that Christ is represented by the Ark of the Covenant. Within the ark were the two tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written. Speaking in the spirit of prophecy in the Psalms, the Redeemer says, "Thy law is within my heart." "Which thing is true in Him and in you." All His new-born children, as the second man the Lord from heaven, have the law of God in their heart too. They are His spiritual seed, and that law which was written in His heart is written in their hearts too. With Him it was a covenant of life, to them it is but a rule of life. For in virtue of the finished work of Christ the Substitute, His people are dead to the claims of the law as a covenant of life or death, and walking in the strength of that life that His finished work supplies, they follow the Lord as dear children in His law's path. This is the desire of the new creation, and the people of God in ages most remote and in every land agree in this. "In thy law's path make me to go, for I delight therein."

The place of these commandments is recognised in the New Testament as the believer's rule of life, were there no further recognition than the reference to the fifth commandment, as the first commandment with promise. These are taken then by the loyal subjects of Christ as their Master's revealed directions for life and guidance, and are loved and obeyed accordingly. Those who are Christ's are His that they may be zealous for good works, and that works may be distinguished as good and bad, a line of demarcation and a rule of direction is required. This is furnished by the summary of moral duties given us in the ten

commandments. They are an integral unity, they stand and fall together, and so the modern tendency to ignore the morality of the fourth commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day," strikes not alone at it, but also at the binding force of all the rest.

II. – But the question arises, how is this yoke assumed, and when assumed, how is it worn? Were the matter of assuming and wearing this yoke left to the will of man the issue would be certain. Though Christ is a king of grace and commends His own yoke, telling us that it is easy, yet none of our race would by natural inclination choose to come under His yoke. The reason of this is obvious. The mind of unrenewed nature is enmity against God, and if the ruin of man were something less absolute than it is, something less glorious than the finished righteousness of Immanuel would serve as a ransom price. The ransom price, however, is nothing less than His precious blood, as that of a lamb without blemish and without spot. This calls for something corresponding to it to be recognised as the ruin that this remedy was intended to meet. The ruin is in God's Word brought before us as utter and hopeless apart from the remedy, as something that could not be met but by such a remedy. It is a ruin that involves man's whole nature – that is nothing less than death in all its awful fulness of meaning. Such a ruin could be met only by the removal of its cause, and the cause of this ruin is effectually removed in the sin-bearing obedience of the Lamb of God. Those for whom He died deserve to die – deserve to remain in the death they had earned for themselves. No one of them had any claim upon God's mercy, and seeing this is so He may, and does, do what He pleases in saving sinners from the wages of their sin. It lay with Him to provide the redemption, for only He could provide it, and when provided, the redemption is His to apply. The thought of this redemption is His. What eye saw not and ear heard not He has revealed. In the work of His incarnate Son He has revealed the power of His arm. By His Spirit in His Word He makes known His way of life, and so grace is sovereign. He is sovereign in providing redemption for the objects of His love, in revealing the way of life to whom He pleases, and in making effectual the record of His gospel for subduing rebel hearts to the obedience of faith. Hence it comes about that those who yield to Christ Jesus and take His yoke upon them do so because they are born of God.

Those that are born of God are the effectually called. They are called to obedience, and the obedience of faith is theirs. This is not something blind or moving at haphazard. God's children are not born again blind. They do not embrace a Saviour they need not. They are not treated as logs of wood by Him when He speaks to them in His Word, and no less are they treated by Him irrationally when they are constrained willingly to take up His yoke. He writes His law on their hearts. He makes known to them its claims. He lets them see, understand, and appreciate how they stand in the light of these claims. He causes them to lay to heart, to realise their own shortcomings, to bring themselves in guilty and excuseless before God. But they are not left ignorant of how the claims of that law they have dishonoured are met and satisfied. The gospel is the power of God to salvation, for it reveals the righteousness of faith. It reveals God's answer to the claims of His offended justice, and those that are born of God are neither left ignorant of this nor left heedless about the matter of the law's claims. They are won for God and as new creatures hunger and thirst for righteousness, finding the righteousness they need in Him, whose flesh is meat indeed and whose blood is drink indeed. A crucified Saviour – made a curse – having soul and body sundered in death, meets the demands of the broken covenant, and what satisfies those demands meets the requirement of their enlightened conscience. They are willing, constrained by grace, to esteem their righteousnesses as filthy rags and to know no hope for righteousness but Christ. They take His yoke by submitting to His righteousness, coming to Him that He may be their Saviour king – coming to Him that they may receive those gifts He is exalted to bestow – coming to Him that they may honour

Him as the Father is honoured, taking Him as their own surety and substitute that so His yoke of grace may rest on their shoulders.

Christ's yoke is assumed when the obedience of faith is rendered to the offer of the everlasting gospel, and the yoke that is then assumed is not assumed in order to be flung off and thrown away. The obedience of faith is a life of faith. The faith that submits to Christ is a principle; it acts, it is true, and is known only in its actings and fruit. But these have something underlying them. The principle of faith originates them, and the acting of faith in submitting to the righteousness of God is but the beginning of a life-long process. The further the believer advances on his way through this world the more thoroughly does he realise the truth of the description God's Word gives him of himself. The more he realises this the more he lays to heart his need and his guilt, and the more he lays these to heart the more precious does the salvation that is of grace in Christ seem to him. He has received Christ Jesus the Lord. He now walks in Him. He abides in Christ. He continues to wear the yoke of grace that he assumed when he yielded to His Lord's claims. The yoke is assumed, and it is worn, and neither its assumption nor its wearing is something blind or unintelligent. Not only is the wearing of the yoke something intelligent, it is spontaneous; it is not by compulsion but of free willingness that this yoke is worn, and the longer it is worn the more familiar does it become. Yet though it becomes more familiar the wearer does not get wearied of it. The better it is known the more wonderfully gracious and adapted to the case of poor sinners will it appear. It is worn then as it is first assumed, willingly and cheerfully. In coming to Christ for cleansing, a sense of shame for sin, of wonder at grace well befits the sinner, and as one advances and knows more of what sin is and what oneself is, this sense of shame and wonder does not become less befitting.

We have spoken of the assumption of the yoke of grace. This is the obedience of faith. But does not Christ's kingly authority claim the new obedience of love and gratitude? Assuredly it does, and in new obedience is this yoke worn. Not alone is there an abiding dependence on Christ Jesus, an abiding indebtedness to Him for acceptance and for strength. There is also an endeavour after willing obedience to all that He is pleased to enjoin, and this new obedience is something natural to those that are His subjects. His law is written on their hearts and this secures that they shall give Him His own place – any place but the highest is not His. He gets the highest place, and it is given ungrudgingly, but apart from the principle of loyalty that is inwrought in the new creature, we may look at the special animating sentiment that inclines His subjects to wear His yoke. They love Him, and what above all melts them into loving obedience and submission is the realisation of His love to them. The love of Christ to themselves they realise in the faith that lays hold of Christ crucified in the gospel. They receive Him as their Saviour, saying, "who loved me and gave Himself for me." But apart from this personal realisation of indebtedness to Him for what He has done for themselves, the view that the gospel gives of Him against whom they have sinned, and who claims their heart's allegiance is in itself a most powerful motive alike to the exercise of self abasement and to the exercise of willing surrender. The God against whom we have sinned is the God who gave His Son to die for sinners. What then is sin when committed against such a God? How all-worthy of love is such a God! How all-worthy of cheerful obedience! If this is so, the general revelation of the love of God in Christ independent of its personal direction to me as an individual, is a powerful argument to loving obedience to His revealed will. But how much more powerful and close at hand is the gospel character of God when we by faith take Him, against whom we have so grievously revolted, as our God and Father in Christ Jesus His Son. When we say appropriating Christ as ours, "who loved me and gave Himself for me," "My Lord and my God," are we not constrained by the love of Christ melted by it, moulded by it, so as to love His law, His way, His people? The path of new obedience is chosen because this is the will of God

even our sanctification, and He would have us holy as He is holy. His sovereign authority is bowed to, His worthiness of being loved is acknowledged, and the revelation of His love serves to fix our devotion to His service. Thus it is that the yoke of Christ is assumed and worn. Not without reason is it assumed, and not without reason is it submitted to, and when it is worn thus, the believer, indebted to Christ for acceptance before God, seeks not to mix with this ground of acceptance any thing even that he is or has done through grace. Grace is the theme of his song.

III. – How does it come to pass that this yoke is easy? We have already considered briefly what the yoke consists in and how it is assumed. If we take good notice of these two matters, we shall see some reasons why the yoke should be and is easy. The yoke is one of grace. Instead then of imposing a burden it removes a burden. The burden of guilt is removed in the assumption of this yoke; with it goes the burden of condemnation and wrath. When the believer receives Christ as His righteousness he is freed from condemnation. He is freed from guilt. But then it may be said it imposes an obligation. Is liberty a burden? True liberty is the portion of those that the Son sets free, all else are slaves. If freedom to serve God in love and free willing devotedness is a burden, then the yoke of Christ does impose a burden, but let us ever remember that His word is true when He says, My yoke is easy. Because His yoke is a yoke of grace it is easy. It is easy when contrasted with the yoke of Satan. It is surely no grievous yoke for poor rebels to come for the gifts that the exalted Redeemer has to bestow. It is no grievous yoke save to pride and self-sufficiency. Pride must bow and self-sufficiency must be cast under foot if Christ's yoke is to be worn. The yoke is easy, but not to flesh and blood.

Look now at the yoke as that of new obedience. Is it not easy in this respect? Christ claims His people's heart, love, and devotion, that they should walk in love, should walk though in this world not after the course of the world. This yoke is easy, for it is but reasonable service. But reasonable service is counted reasonable only by those that are reasonable themselves, and none are truly reasonable but those that have submitted to Christ and His yoke. This is true soundness of mind, and all who are thus sound-minded count the service of the Redeemer as their reasonable service. The reasonableness of His service does not depend on how it is looked at. It is as truly reasonable in itself when it is rejected as folly by man's wisdom, as when it is accepted as wisdom by those that have been made fools in their own consciousness. There is then an adaptation between the nature of Christ's service and the inclinations of His spiritually quickened servants. When the yoke is lined it does not gall, and when love to the Master lines His yoke the language of His loving lieges is, His commandments are not grievous. This adaptation of the yoke to the bent of the new creature brings it about that the yoke is easy. But further, the principle of love inflamed with gratitude secures that what Christ asks for shall be willingly conceded. The reasonableness of the services, the adaptation of the yoke to the shoulders that wear it, and the bearing power of love and gratitude, bring it about that this yoke is easy, or rather make the yoke to be felt to be what it is indeed – easy and not grievous. But it may be said, If this yoke is easy how comes it to pass that those who wear it so often complain? Their complaints don't affect the truth of Christ's words, for so long as they are here on earth the saints of the Most High are compassed with infirmity. The good they would they do not, and the evil that they would not, that they do. They would be perfect if they could, but there is a law in their members warring against the law of their minds and bringing them into captivity. In the measure in which this law makes its presence felt, in that measure do they complain. It is true then that they complain, and that others know this, but let us look at what they complain of. Do they complain of Christ or of His yoke, or of His sovereign allotment of their portion? They complain of none of these. There is, it is true, a principle within antagonistic to God's glory, and it, if it

had its way, would make them not alone complain of Christ but cast off His yoke. There is at the same time, however, the spirit lusting against the flesh, and so Christ's yoke has never been cast off by any that ever truly assumed it. Their complaint then is not of Christ. It is directed to Him. But its subject is themselves. Being reconciled to God they suffer not self and its claims to come in between themselves and the allegiance they owe to Him. They complain not *of* Him but *to* Him. With one voice they have to testify that He is good, and that He has never done aught but good to them. Has He visited them with bitter things in providence? They consider these things as less than their desserts, and when they realise their standing in Christ they see the most unlikely things working for their good. Out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of the strong comes forth sweetness. With one voice the true Church of God testifies to the easiness of Christ's yoke. Those who agree not with them have never worn it, and they cannot speak from experience. All who can speak from experience have the one testimony to bear, and they set to their seal that Christ is true, when He says of His yoke, My yoke is easy. Setting to their seal they say to others, Come with us and we shall do you good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. The Bride says, Come. The Spirit says, Come. Christ says, Take my yoke on you, and now seeing there is such consentient witness-bearing and gracious invitations, what have you, poor sinner, to say against the yoke of Christ? Is it not easy? If you have never tried you cannot say. The yoke you wear, however it may suit corrupt nature, will load you with final perdition and endless shame. Life, health, and salvation are to be had but in one way, and that way is, that you should take the yoke upon you of which Christ testifies saying – "My yoke, is easy."

[December 1899]

Notes of a Sermon

By the late Rev ARCHIBALD COOK.
Preached in Duke Street Free Church, Glasgow, 5th June, 1855.

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” – Luke 12:32.

There are very few of the hearers of the gospel but are desirous of hearing something about heaven or hell, yet very few seek for evidences of a change in themselves. The greater part are content without God. When they come to die they shall be greatly disappointed. But the little flock will not be content with hearing about heaven without some evidences that heaven belongs to them. In this chapter the Saviour was speaking to His disciples. We read in another place that they left all and followed Christ. They had no worldly prospects before them, and so it was no wonder though they would have some spiritual difficulties as to how they would get through the world. Christ is now encouraging them. At the 24th verse He says, “Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?” At last He leads them to eternity. One thought of eternity will put all worldly concerns out of their mind. “But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Whatever difficulties they might meet in the world, this would sweeten their troubles. These words belong to the elect people of God. I will endeavour to show: –

- I. – The Saviour has a little flock in the world.
- II. – Something of the character of this little flock.
- III. – As to how it is the Father’s good pleasure to give them the kingdom.

I. – The Saviour has a little flock. I would observe here: –

1. That the Saviour has a little flock as He is the Creator of all. Every creature depends upon Him, and all must render account to Him. He speaks here to the Church as the Saviour or living head of the Church. In the covenant of grace creatures are spoken of as belonging to the Godhead in the Father. It is the prerogative of the Godhead to elect sinners. Election is a mystery above our comprehension. We all lost our right to the favour of God by sin. We lost our character. We left God at liberty to save us or put us to hell. Election is an act of God in which He sheweth His own sovereignty. We were before His eye from eternity lying in our blood. Those whom God passed by cannot impute injustice to God. He left them in the state they brought themselves into, and those whom He saves get what they do not deserve. If you were going to glory and asking the redeemed why they were taken there, they would only say, “It was of God’s will.” They were given to the second person of the Godhead as a little flock to whom He may say, “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” It is in this way that their names are said to be engraven on His heart and on the palms of His hands. This was a part of the joy set before Him when He endured the cross.

2. The Son has a little flock as surety. He became their surety to the Father. The Father did not lose His interest in the little flock when He committed them to the Mediator. He once committed the human race to a man but the man failed, and He would not commit one soul now to all the angels in glory. For He knows the value of the soul. Christ became surety as Judah said to his father regarding Benjamin. “I will be surety for him: of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever” (Genesis 43:9). Christ will present the Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. It is to the surety the father looks, not to them. The security of the soul stands in the living Head. “If his children forsake my law and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.” But what follows? “Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.”

3. The Saviour has a little flock as Redeemer. He required to redeem them. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot." When the Saviour delivers a soul from the devil, it is not for nothing. Everything He obtains is represented as a purchased possession. This work of redemption required to be wrought out in the human nature. (1) It was for this cause that the Saviour stooped so low as to take the human nature into a personal union. He did it for the glory of His Father and the good of His creatures. No wonder then that the angels sing with the heavenly host, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." It was for this end the Son of God was revealed that He might destroy the works of the devil. (2) The law looked for satisfaction for transgressions. The authority of God is to be seen in the punishment of sin. Sinners will have to do with God yet. This is their day, but His day is coming. The Saviour was made under the law to give satisfaction to its demands. In human nature He gave this obedience which reconciled the glory of God and the salvation of the little flock. Here is a mystery in which the little flock will swim through eternity. It was by His death He was in a particular way to purchase their redemption. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." He delivered them from the curse of the law being made a curse for them. "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." His sacrifice was not only without spot, but also a sweet smelling savour unto God. The savour of sin ascended to heaven and brought down the curse of God, but this savour sets the little flock at liberty. (3) It was as a substitute in covenant He died and set them at liberty. "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit in which there is no water." In this view they were to get their life for His death. They were to be saved from the wrath of God through His drinking that wrath. "Ought not Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?" (4) They were so ordered from eternity that they were to get everything as the fruit of His intercession. They would have a new right to things on this earth as well as to spiritual blessings. "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." His throne was to be their throne. I often wonder what makes the redeemed in heaven so happy when they think of believers on earth. It is this: they see the Mediator has each one's case in His hand, and will make everything work together for their good. He is the friend of the broken-hearted and the tempted, and He will plead their cause.

II. – Something of the character of the little flock.

1. The Saviour's flock may be said to be little on account of their fewness. Many are concerned if they go for one night a few miles from home, where they will sleep or how they will be, and never were concerned where they will spend eternity. They were but a little flock when He was in the world, and not all genuine. One of them was a devil. But when He makes up His jewels there will be a multitude that no man can number.

2. They are counted little by the world. The world says they are of weak minds. We like very well to see people have a little religion, but we do not like too much of it. You never hear them say, "We have too much of the world."

3. They may be called little because they are little in their own eyes. Their faith is little, their hope is little, their repentance is little, their obedience is little. Why? Because God has become great in their eyes; The world is so big in the eyes of the unrenewed that God is little to them. Every unregenerate person is a god in his own eyes. The soul becomes little in its own eyes by the Spirit's teaching. The Spirit begets by the Word faith in the being of Jehovah. This is the beginning of the work in the soul that will cause it to shine through an endless eternity. This preserves alive spiritual concern in the soul. You may be on your knees at the day of judgment and after all be as hard as a stone. It is a sense of the sweetness and

loveliness of the Divine Being springing up in their souls that brings them to say, "I am more brutish than any man." "I am a beast before thee." If this is brought alive in your souls, it will make you little enough.

4. The little flock feel the weakness of their spiritual desires after the revelation of the glory of the Godhead. One may have as much of God as will carry him through the world, but this is not what the gracious soul wants. It wants something that will transform it into the image of God.

5. They feel the need of God's assistance in the means of grace. Some glimpses of the infinite majesty of God make duty become as a mountain. Many will see in eternity that they were not praying to God, that they had neither God, Christ, nor the Spirit in their prayers. Glimpses of the Divine Majesty make reading the Bible, asking a blessing on food become a mountain. Some new grace is needed by the soul from the fountain.

6. It is in the promise by faith that they have all, like Abraham. He had not anything but in the promise. The new heart is in the promise. Is there any poor creature here who goes to pray depending on the promise?

7. The spiritual difficulties that meet them. We read of Jacob, a worm, thrashing the mountains. Wonderful, when he was a worm he thrashed the mountains, but when he became a mountain, the worm thrashed him. When the sinner looks to the Lord he sees nothing in himself. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." When it is said, "Fear not," this shows they have fears, and they must be removed by the great Advocate. The first ray of light that enters a soul, the creature begins to leave himself at Christ's feet for safety. He breaks Himself to them. The world speak of a whole Saviour, but He never break Himself to them. The people of God see in Christ all that will meet their wants, and they feel that they can go to eternity depending on Him. They look to Him for everything. "As poor, having nothing, yet possessing all things." No love in them possessing love in Him. The Spirit of God opens the fountain so that they look out of themselves. The poor carnal world are content to hear of Christ, though He never opened His bosom to them. Did you know till then the sweetness of prayer, of singing a psalm, of going to the Lord's table, of the fellowship of God's people? A living soul will move, a dead soul will not move. The people of the world are as righteous on Monday as on Sabbath. It is a dead soul that never thinks of that state in which he will have life as long as God has a being. The people of God have fears, so that the Saviour has to speak to them. It is no wonder though people who are from hand to mouth are afraid they will come to poverty. It is no wonder though the poor widow with whom Elijah lived was afraid every time she went to the barrel of meal and cruse of oil, thinking they might be done when she went. So in like manner there is always something needed from the white throne to the poor soul. If the Lord pardons a creature's sins, He will put them before his eyes, so that he will be praying for them till the day of his death, or there will be some cross that will keep his wounds bleeding. When the psalmist was in old age, we hear him saying, "Remember not the sins of my youth." Something from the white throne is needed. "Fear not little flock." Let them see one drop of the infinite purity of God, of Christ, of the angels, they will be brought to say, "Can I ever be made fit for the enjoyment of such?" Yet nothing lower will satisfy them. The world call the people of God deranged and gloomy; they did not like the Saviour: He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. They have their fears of Jordan. It is not a little thing to look to eternity. Look above, you see eternity, below, you see eternity, before, you see eternity, and behind, you see eternity. No wonder then, those who have this fear are trembling creatures, and need something from the white throne. The Lord sits on the floods.

III. – As to how it is the Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom. They are the fruit of the Saviour's death on the cross. The soul of God turned to the fruit of Christ's

death. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, said the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." They are infinitely precious in His sight. You that love Christ love God, for He is the first object of the Father's love out of Himself. It is the Father's good pleasure to give such the kingdom.

Conclusion. – As for election, it is true, but let it not keep any from the Saviour. While you have a soul and body together, come to the Saviour; you are invited. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Can you go to your bed without Him, can you go to your work without Him, can you go to eternity without Him? To those who trust in Christ for salvation, He will give their souls at the great day, and they will say, He is a worthy Saviour, and will put the crown on His head. To you who did not give Him your souls, He will say, "Find your own souls, you would not trust them to me." "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief." Oh, that precious jewel that heaven and earth cannot fill, but God who made it. You poor little flock to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom, you will in a few days shine as the stars through endless eternity.

[December 1899]

A Sermon.

By the Rev. ALEXANDER STEWART, Oban.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" – Hebrews 9:27.

The commencement of a New Year is usually a season of joy and rejoicing; and perhaps this is not unnatural. But it is to be feared that too often on such occasions the merriment of men is marred with sinful and shameful excesses. Of those even who live in comparative restraint during the rest of the year many seem to think that at this time they have license to indulge in an annual carousal. The lapse of time, as marked by the succession of the years, the dying of the old and the birth of the new, ought, however, to foster solemn reflection. We are being carried forward, silently but surely, on our journey from time to eternity, and the swift flight of the years marks the rapidity of our progress. Very soon our race will have been run. We shall have entered on our last year, and sooner or later, before its close, we shall have to bid this world farewell. This is a truth of which we are prone to live in studied forgetfulness. It is well that we should pause and consider it. Let us pause and consider it now. God is speaking to us in His Word, and the declarations of His truth but verify the experience of our daily life. It is appointed, He says, unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. Let us examine briefly the import of this solemn statement.

It is as an illustration that these words have been introduced by the Apostle. He is using them to show that there is some kind of parallel in the universal experience of men to the death and second Advent of Christ; but although their occurrence in this particular passage is subordinate to the main purpose in hand, and although in considering them separately we are isolating them from the context in which they have their setting, their significance is none the less real, and their claims to separate consideration none the less urgent. The Apostle has been contrasting the Old Testament dispensation with the New. He shows us how the types and shadows and ceremonial rites of Old Testament worship found their fulfilment in the work of Christ. He is showing us the superior glory of the good things which have come with Christ. The ceremonial observances of the Old Testament could not of themselves make those who engaged in them perfect. They could not deliver the conscience from the wrath of God. The service consisted in meats and drinks, and divers washings and carnal ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ has appeared, an High Priest of good things to come, and the Old Testament dispensation has come to an end. It had a glory, but it had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. The ordinances of Old Testament worship were not meant to be enduring. They were to last only until the time of reformation; but that which has taken their place is permanent. Christ is a High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. He is alive after the power of an endless life. And the kingdom we have received is one that cannot be moved. The sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood were inferior. It was impossible that the blood of bulls or of goats should take away sin. There were countless thousands of them slain on Jewish altars, but they could not of themselves atone for the guilt of one sin. Lebanon was not sufficient to burn, nor all the beasts thereof for a burnt offering. But there has come One who offered Himself, through the eternal Spirit, without spot unto God, and put away sin for ever by the sacrifice of Himself. The Levitical priesthood had to offer sacrifices for themselves as well as for the people, for they were only sinful men. But here is One who was without spot – holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners – who came by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building. They had to offer sacrifices continually, for the intrinsic insufficiency of the oblation called for its perpetual renewal. He, by one sacrifice, perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and needed not to offer up Himself continually. He appeared once, in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. This is what the Apostle is illustrating in the words before us. He is showing that Christ had not to be offering Himself, and suffering death continually from the beginning of the world. He appeared once, and, once for all, put away sin. He appeared once, in the end of the world, a sin bearer. He is going to appear again, a second time, without sin unto salvation. It is appointed unto men once to die, and only once; and when Christ appeared among men, as the surety and

substitute of many, the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, Christ too must die; but in that He died, He died unto sin once: death hath no more dominion over Him. And as unto men there comes judgment after death, so there is something to correspond with this in the case of Christ. He is to appear again unto them that look for Him, without sin, unto salvation. This is the parallel.

We are called upon first to consider the solemn truth taught us here concerning the human race: it is appointed unto men once to die. This appointment is of God. He has a purpose, an eternal purpose, whereby for His own glory He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. God knows the end from the beginning. He knew from eternity all things that ever were, or shall be; and each of these things had its place within His eternal decree. Nor has any event been determined in eternity isolated from the circumstances which occasioned it in time, and of which it forms a part. Nothing, indeed, in the universe stands alone. Each event had precursors which produced it; each produces others in turn. So it is from the beginning to the conclusion, from God the Source unto God the End. The universe is a chain of circumstances which stand to one another in the relation of cause and effect; and the decree of God embraces all things that come to pass, in the order in which they occur in the plan of the universe, produced by causes, and determined by conditions. Now this appointment that men should die is embraced within God's decree; but it has its place in an order of events which are connected one with another as cause and effect. It is suspended in that order on a cause, and that cause is sin. Sin is embraced within the Divine decree. For, observe, the Divine decree does not interfere with the perfect freedom of moral agents. The good that is in man is from God; but man's sin is his own. For certain wise ends God permitted the entrance of sin. He permissively decreed that it should take place; and yet each act of sin is an act for which man alone is responsible. It is a great mystery this, how God decrees the free acts of men, and yet men are none the less responsible for their sins. The Jews were surely responsible for crucifying the Lord of Glory, and yet we read that He was delivered according to the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God.

Well, sin entered into the world, and death came by sin. It is appointed unto men once to die, because men have sinned. Ah, friend, sin is a terrible thing. It wrought a fearful ruin in the human family. You may think lightly of it. You indulge in it with a light heart, your feet are swift to run in its ways, you drink it up like water; but sin will give you an Eternity in hell unless you are saved from it in Time. Sin opened a wide door for misery. It brought upon us the curse of God. Within that curse are included all the miseries to which man is exposed in Time and Eternity. Death came in by sin. Spiritual death came instantaneously, temporal death will follow sooner or later according to God's sovereign appointment, and eternal death will be the portion of every soul that will not be washed from his sins in the blood of Christ. It is appointed unto men once to die. It is appointed unto each one of us: the valley of the shadow of death lies before us all. It is strange how men live in habitual forgetfulness of the fact that death is awaiting them. They are reminded of it every day. Seldom does a day pass over our head but we see or hear of someone that has been removed by death; and yet each one seems to live as if he had his portion in this world for ever. The very thought of death is distasteful to us. We shrink from contemplating it. Men banish such gloomy reflections from their minds, and set themselves to make the most of the passing hour. Let us eat and drink and be merry, say they, let not this disturber be allowed to spoil our enjoyment of life with all that it casts at our feet. But it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment. Friend, it is a solemn consideration, and I beseech you, whoever you may be, to let this word of God speak to your reason and conscience. Dismiss it not from your thoughts; let it sink into your heart; and meditate over it and consider this question – are you prepared to die? It is appointed unto you to die. The hour of it has been fixed from eternity, and let it be near, or let it be far away, it is coming steadily, surely, coming. Are you prepared to die, friend? Ask the

question of yourself – am I prepared to die? Am I prepared to meet God? Have I anything to lean on, anything to hope in, or trust, when the waters of Jordan are passing over my soul, or when I shall have to stand before the great white Throne of Judgment? And if your answer must be – I am not prepared; I am a stranger to Christ; my sins are unforgiven; I am still in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, then I pray you to consider the fearfulness of your state. As death finds you so will your condition be throughout eternity; and, think, if death came to you now what eternity would be.

The *time* of each one's death is appointed by God. You know not when it will be; no one knows when it will be but God. The future is hid from us. But the very moment at which it will take place has been determined by God from all eternity. That appointment cannot be altered. It is unchangeable. Let us do what we will to avoid it; let us take what precautions we may; let us hedge ourselves round with all the securities the world can afford, when the appointed time has run, then we shall have to go. Death knows no pity. You may now be in the enjoyment of perfect health, you may live in the full flush of physical and mental vigour, but if it is God's appointment that before the sunrise of another day death should claim you as its own – and for all that you or I know that may be the case – then you will have to obey the summons. No human power can keep you. No reluctance on your part to go, no desperate clinging to life, no frantic clutching at the things that are seen and temporal, will avail to avert the inevitable hour. The grim messenger of justice will accomplish his work whatever resistance may meet him. It is appointed unto men once to die, and death will not linger one moment behind the hour of that appointment.

The *manner* of it is appointed, has been appointed from all eternity. Death has many avenues of approach to the sons of men. He has many forms of attack. He is the last enemy, and he has many ways of waging combat. He may come suddenly as a thief in the night. He sends no herald to announce his advance. His victims are unsuspecting. They fancy themselves secure. But when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. In the morning they are strong and active in the full exercise of bodily and mental power; at even they are cold and still in the embrace of death. The last enemy has come and their strength gave way before his resistless stroke. Or he may come gradually, and, as it were, perceptibly. He makes his way slowly, by means of disease. He attacks at some one point, and through that avenue aims at the seat of life. And there may be a stout and prolonged resistance, and every inch of the ground may be stubbornly contested. You have seen this, have you not? You may have witnessed a grim conflict between life and death; life with its whole force resisting, and striving to beat off the attack, and death creeping on slowly inch by inch, ever gaining ground and weakening the defence, until at last the field is won, and the grave cries for its own. He may come with all the confused noise and terribleness at his command. He hides not the grim fearfulness of his face. He breaks in on his victims with all his terrors, so that their heart and flesh do faint and fail before him, and the horrors of the conflict freeze their very blood. He may come with pain and suffering. He may wrench every fibre of men's being, and tear and lacerate them in his iron grasp. He may stretch them many a weary night and day on beds of languishing and indescribable agony, so that there be nothing present to the consciousness but the bitterness of suffering. This, too, you may have seen. You may have stood by and witnessed it, the conflict, the agony, the low moan of anguish, the heaving breast, the white parched lips, the short, quick drawn breathing, until at last there is a final struggle, short but terrible, and then silence. Death has finished his work. God's appointment is accomplished. Or he may come quietly and gently, like a calm sleep or a soft breath of air. There is no pain, there is no struggle, there is no terribleness. Death can hide his terrors, and tread with a light step when that is the appointment of God. There is a calm on the waters, and the winds and the waves are still. Life fades imperceptibly like the evening light, and

the touch of death is so soft and gentle that you can scarce hear the rustle of his goings, He can even veil his work with a peculiar kind of beauty, and leave behind him an expression of sweet and placid repose. But it is death all the same, and there too he has accomplished his mission. He may come in the sunset of life, when the day's work is finished, when man has attained to ripe old age, and the vital powers have ebbed away in natural decay. He may come during the strength of manhood, when the bodily functions are unimpaired, and the mind is in the full swing of its native vigour. Or he may come in the morning of life, when its possibilities are unfolding, and hope is high within the soul. He may break in on fair promises, and lay his ruthless touch on the bloom of youthful beauty; and long before the allotted span of life has run the silver cord may be loosed and the golden bowl be broken. But howsoever it comes, at whatever time, and in whatever manner, let it come terribly or let it come gently, let it come suddenly or let it come unexpectedly, let it come in the morning of life or at noon, or amid the shades of evening, this at least is certain – death *will* come; for it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.

Friend, it may be you are bound up in the things of this life. You cling to it with a desperate tenacity. Your heart is in it. You shrink from the thought of departing from it. You love the things of the world. You love the ways of the world. You banish the thoughts of dissolution. You dismiss all gloomy reflections. The sweetness of your domestic life, the pleasures of your social environment, the interests of your life's work – these are things on which your heart is fixed, and round which its fibres are fondly entwined. You spend your strength on things that are seen and temporal. The world is prospering with you. Things are doing well. You are thinking of pulling down the old barns and putting up new ones. You are saying, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry. Thou fool! – that is what God says to thee. Hast thou forgotten that it is appointed unto men once to die? To-night God may require thy soul of thee, and whose shall these things be that thou hast provided? Young man, whosoever you be that read those lines, listen to those words of God. You are rejoicing in your strength. You feel the pulsations of perfect health vibrating through your frame. Youth is on your side. The evil day is far distant. Life is long, and life is sweet. It is specially sweet to the strong and the active; and so long as that strength and activity last, you are going to dispense with God. But though thou rejoice in thy strength, and though thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and though thou walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. For thee also it is appointed once to die. Young woman, you are happy and light-hearted in the enjoyment of life. It possesses for your heart many attractions. When the glow of health is on the cheek, and the hope of youth is in the breast, and strength and vigour are in the frame, there is a keen enjoyment in living, and it is hard to think of leaving it all behind. It is hard to think of bidding farewell to the bright sunshine of life, and entering the dark valley of the shadow of death. Truly light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; and you say to yourself, I'll make the most of life – I'll cull all the sweetness out of it I can. And so you give your heart to the world, and you drink of its pleasures, and you put the thought of death far from you. But you, too, are embraced within the terms of this declaration – it is appointed unto men once to die. Your beauty will soon be consumed by the touch of decay; the corruption of the tomb will soon ravage your comeliness; that body of which you think so much, and on which you spend so much care and thought, will soon be mouldering in the dust whence it came. The world will do little for you when it comes to that hour. Your friends can do little for you. The things that attract and please you now will fail to sustain you then. When the damp of death is on your brow, and the pains of death are racking your frame, and the cold of death is chilling your blood, there is nothing that can sustain your soul but the consolations of the grace of God. You who are proud and defiant, incline your ear, if but for a moment, and hearken to

those words. It is appointed unto men once to die. You think you will defy death. You put a bold face on it. Let it come, you say; what about it? When it comes we shall meet it like men, and if we must go, then we must; but why brood over it, and let its shadow darken our path and spoil our present enjoyment? Ah, friend, that may do very well just now; it sounds very heroic, and the heroism may be real as well as apparent. But remember that God speaks not only of death. He says that after death there is judgment. Your easy carelessness may not forsake you up till the very hour of death: but death is not the extinction of being. There is an "after this," and be assured of it, in that "after this" there will be no carelessness, and no haughtiness of spirit, and no defiance of God. Your existence is not to terminate with this present life, for you have within you a never-dying soul. Death is not the annihilation of that soul; it is only the separation of the soul from its tenement of clay, and the consequent dissolution of the body. As your state will be when that separation takes place, so will be the judgment. And though you steel yourself to meet the last enemy with an undaunted heart, your fortitude will not sustain you at the throne of judgment. The proud will then be as stubble, and the strong as tow.

The limitations of space forbid more than a reference to the second part of the important truth under our consideration. We pass over the significant fact that it is only once that men die, that there will be no opportunity of living our life over again with a view to altering our eternal destiny. Nor can we here enter into a detailed consideration of the difference between the death of the righteous and the death of the wicked. A difference there certainly is, an infinite difference. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory, and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection. The souls of the unbelieving will immediately pass into hell – that is the teaching of God's Word – and there they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. There is a particular judgment of each soul at death, when its condition for eternity will be determined by the relation it bears to Christ. There is the judgment of the great day, when God will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. I saw, says John, a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Who is it that sits on the throne? It, is the Lamb of God. It is the Son of Man. He is seated as Judge. All authority, and power, and might, and dominion are in His hands. He has power to avenge Himself on His adversaries. He will take vengeance on them that know not God, and obeyed not the gospel of Jesus Christ. Who may abide the day of His coming? It will be the day of the wrath of the Lamb. Woe unto those who despised and rejected His overtures of peace and mercy in the gospel. Woe unto them that refused when He called, and hearkened not when He stretched out His hands to them. It is their turn now to cry, and His to be silent; theirs to stretch out their hands, and His to refuse to regard. They will cry unto the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. But the mountains and the rocks will refuse to answer them: hiding-place they can find none. The sea will give up its dead, and death and hell will deliver their dead, and great and small will stand before the Son of Man in judgment. The books will be opened, and each man will be judged according to the things that are written in them. The breakers of God's law will be judged according to their transgressions; the rejectors of the gospel will be judged according to the measure of their privileges, and the varied aggravations of their guilt. And they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. They will meet Him whom they despised and rejected, and crucified afresh, and put to open shame.

They will meet Him, no longer a gentle, willing, compassionate Saviour, inviting them in words of tender entreaty to come unto Him that they might have rest; but they will meet Him, and see Him, and hear Him in the awful majesty of that great white throne, surrounded by His mighty angels. They will meet Him in all the unbending sternness and inviolable majesty of eternal law and justice. The day of mercy will have passed; the day of wrath will have come. There will be no faltering in the voice that will pronounce their sentence; there will be no pity in the accents that will say, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

But what a different day it will be for the child of God. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity. It will be a glorious day for them. It will be the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, the day of their open acknowledgment and acquittal before an assembled universe. It will be the day of the second appearing of the Son of Man unto them that look for Him. It will be without sin for Him; it will be unto salvation for them. He will appear in glory in order to glorify them. He will come to be glorified in the saints, and to be admired in them that believe. It will be a day of gladness of heart, of joy unspeakable, and full of glory. There will be a joyous re-union of soul and body – their bodies fashioned like unto the body of Christ's glory, their souls purified from sin for ever, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. God will not be ashamed to be called their God, seeing He hath prepared for them a city. Into that city they will then have an abundant entrance. They will enter the New Jerusalem, the city of the great King, whereof it is written that the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. They shall go no more out. And His servants shall serve Him.

Let me, in conclusion, say a word regarding the first part of the parallel – the offering of Christ for the sins of many. It brings before us a door of hope. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. It is the good news of the kingdom. It is as rivers of waters in a dry place and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. This is the gospel – the only hope for a lost, guilty sinner – Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and the Christ that was once offered a sacrifice on the cross, is now offered a Saviour in the gospel. We have here the substitutionary work of the Son of God on behalf of sinful men. He died for guilty sinners. That is what is meant by saying that He was offered for their sins. Whom did Christ die for? We do not know who they are whom He died for, for God's word does not tell us; but we know this, He died for many. We know that He died for those who were given Him by the Father, and we know that those who were given Him by the Father were many, for he was predestinated to be the first-born among many brethren. We know that He gave His life a ransom for many, and that He will bring many sons unto glory, and that will be a divine many, many as the sands by the seashore, and as the stars of the sky innumerable. He bore the sins of many. He was appointed to bear the sins of many. He was appointed by God from eternity, and He undertook the work that was appointed. Him; and in the fulness of time – that is, the time appointed by God – He appeared in the world. Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, He said; but a body hast thou prepared for me. He took the body that was prepared for Him that He might have something to offer. For He appeared in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He appeared the Son of God, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person, the Eternal Word that was in the beginning with God, and that was God. He appeared as the sin-bearer. Every step He took in the world was a sinless step, but it was the step of a sin-bearer. Whose sins did he bear? He bare the sins of many. They were imputed to Him. The Lord laid them on Him by a sovereign judicial act; laid them on Him as surety and substitute, that He might bear them, that He might take them away and make an end of them for ever. And it was with those sins that He met death,

and that death met Him. Death is the king of terrors; but it was never so terrible as when it met the Lord Jesus. It was armed with all its terrors. It was armed with its sting. And that sting was made strong by the law of God pronouncing its curse and condemnation on those sins that He bare. It was a terrible death that He met. It was as terrible as the enmity and hatred of earth and hell and the wrath of heaven could make it. The cup was charged with the bitterness of the curse of God. The death had the fierce wrath of Jehovah in it. And He met death. He met death as death was never met before, and as it never will be again. Death was strong, and its sting was strong; but here was one who was stronger. He was offered. He offered Himself. That is a sacrificial term. It implies His priestly action. He met death armed with its sting and its terrors. He met death, and closed with death, and the sting entered His soul. The floods of God's wrath burst on Him; and the gates of hell combined to overthrow Him, and men imbrued their hands in His blood; but death never met such an one before. Death met one it could not conquer. It met one whose activities were neither overcome nor interrupted in its terrible throes. It met one who in the blackest hour of that awful darkness, in the deepest depths of that fearful agony, in the bitterest moment of that terrible conflict, maintained unimpaired the full exercise of His priestly powers. He had a work to do and He did it. He had to pour out His soul, and He accomplished it. He had a sacrifice to offer and He offered it, offered it in death, offered it through death; and death was vanquished, and spoiled, and triumphed over with a song of victory. O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? He offered Himself through the Eternal Spirit without spot unto God. He offered Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God; and the Lord is well-pleased for His righteousness' sake. This is the gospel. What more would you wish for? What more do you need? The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. It is the blood of a divine Person; and can cleanse your soul from all its guilt and defilement, though your sins be as scarlet and though they be red like crimson. Christ as He is, to you as you are, these are the terms of God. Come to Him then, as you are, in guilt and corruption, in helplessness and misery, and find Him to be, as He is, a Saviour to the uttermost.

[January 1900]

Notes of a Sermon

By the Rev. JOHN MACLEOD, M.A., Ullapool.

“My burden is light” – Matthew 11:30.

Christ the king has a burden as well as a yoke for His subjects. The burden is not the yoke, nor is the yoke the burden. They are not the same, yet they are not separate. All who are under the yoke have the burden to bear, and none bear Christ's burden but those that wear Christ's yoke.

In order to redeem His church He too had a yoke to wear and a burden to bear, and His yoke was not easy, and His burden was not light. He bore the grievous yoke of a broken law, and the heavy burden of its curse. He did this, and for the joy set before Him He endured the Cross, despising the shame. His love to His people made the grievous yoke bearable and the heavy burden light. It was His delight to do the Father's will, and to save His people from death. The heavy end of the yoke was His, and His bearing of their burden secures that His burden is light – the burden He gives them to bear.

Christ's burden relates to His kingly authority as surely as His yoke does. But when His yoke is considered it is seen to relate to His authority in commanding or enjoining, while, on the other hand, His burden refers to His sovereign right to appoint what He pleases as the portion of His subjects. There is an aspect of His sovereignty brought before us, when He, as sovereign, commands the dead to do what none but the living can do. When He says, Make you a new heart, His sovereign claims on His sinful creatures are that they should do what is beyond their power, but what is not beyond His right. It is true the dead cannot quicken themselves, but He has never lost His right to that living and loving obedience. that none but the spiritually quickened can render. This aspect of Christ's sovereignty binds His creatures to the duty of taking His yoke as mediator upon them, and of wearing that yoke. It does not bind Him to give any of them power to do what He commands. The fact of their being powerless to render obedience to His behests is their sin. They are responsible for it, and if their miserable plight were sufficient to bind Him to give the needed power to obey to any of them, it would bind Him to give it to them all. Salvation would forthwith cease to be of grace. Condemnation and ruin because of sin would cease to be righteous. Grace would be no more grace, and sin would actually demand, at the hand of God, that He should give His Son as a ransom, and His Spirit to quicken all His righteously condemned foes. Further, the deeper one would be sunk in sin, the stronger would his claim be, because his misery would be deeper. Christ is sovereign in commanding the dead to live, but His command, apart from His effectuating purpose, does not assure that any shall live or take His yoke upon them. This sovereign authority claims from us the obedience of faith. This is the glory that His sovereign command calls for at our hand. But as surely as His sovereign command calls for a revenue of glory, so surely does His sovereign appointment call for submission. He does according to His will among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. His sovereign appointment is ever righteous and unchangeably holy. But it is not always light. There are two spheres in which it moves. He appoints the portion not alone of His friends but also of His foes, and the final allotment to His foes of indignation, dishonour, and wrath can by no means be said to be light. Yet it is the burden that His holy sovereignty is pleased to appoint for them. Seeing then His sovereign appointment is not always light, let us consider what particularly is meant by His burden, of which He speaks in these words. Let us consider –

- I. – What the burden means and includes.
- II. – How this burden is to be borne.
- III. – How this burden is light.

I. – Christ's yoke is not His burden, and yet it cannot be worn without having the burden inseparably accompanying it as long as the believer lives on this earth. They that would live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. They, as His soldiers, have to fight. In their campaigning there is marching, there is fighting, there is watching, there are cold and hunger. Sudden and fierce assaults have to be resisted. Dangers beset on every side. The soldier of Christ has to endure hardness, and so the burden has its inseparable connection here with the yoke. If there were no foes to meet, if there were no tempting devil, if there were no alluring world, if there were no deceitful heart within, the wearing of the yoke would not bring with it such a burden. But we live in a world of realities. People may dream of a system without

world, flesh, and devil arrayed against the child of God, but facts are facts, and dreams are but dreams. The world is a reality; its allurements are a reality. The law of sin in the members is a hard reality, and as long as these things are so the course of the children of God must be rough; their way must be uneven; through many tribulations they shall enter the kingdom. They shall come out, however, of all their tribulations, wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. We have to take things as they are, and we are not to imagine that they are otherwise than as they are indeed. The children of God have rest, but they have conflict. Christ's yoke is easy, but those who wear it have to pass through the enemies' land, and warfare and conflict are their portion. There is a burden connected with the wearing of His yoke; yet His yoke is no burden. The burden does not lie in His yoke. The burden comes from the associated powers of evil, and the resistance they offer the Christian on his homeward way. "We that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened." They groan, not, however, desiring to be unclothed but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life. It is Christ's sovereign appointment that these groans and sighs shall be theirs. This burden He gives them to bear: it is His allotment for them.

There is not only the burden of resistance from adverse forces to be borne; there is also the burden of the withdrawing of the comfort, of God's salvation. This is administered to the heirs of the promise as the Lord sees meet for them. The joy of the Lord is the strength of His people. It is as they enjoy the light of His face that they are strengthened to fight the good fight of faith. He, however, is not bound to give them the same experience continually of the sweetness of His communion, and when the light of His countenance is withheld this is a burden for the true child of God. As to their standing of acceptance in Christ it is ever the same, but their realisation of their acceptance and of its preciousness may vary. Perhaps as chastisement for careless walking this punishment is inflicted, perhaps in absolute sovereignty they are thus treated, in order to spur them forward and make them realise afresh how precious God's salvation is. Whether as chastisement or as spur this burden is a burden indeed. But it is Christ's burden. He is sovereign in allotting it to them as their portion, and thus though it is a burden, it is light because it is His.

His sovereign will, however, not only ordains what His people shall suffer from the world, and what they shall enjoy or fall short of in communion, with Himself; it also arranges their circumstances in providence. They are not exempt from troubles, trials, disappointments, losses, crosses. These things have to be borne. For God deals with them as with sons, and what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? Such difficulties as meet them in providence they share with the world at large, but there is a deep distinction between their losses and those that the ungodly suffer. All inflictions are not chastisements. Chastisement is a peculiar privilege of the household of God. He ministers it to them that they may be made partakers of His holiness. In the world He has left them tribulation, but with it good cheer, for He has overcome. He has overcome, and He chastises them that they may come out of the furnace tried gold, that they too may overcome. Overcome they cannot unless they engage in the conflict. No conflict no victory, but not only is there conflict, there is endurance. His will is not alone to be done, it is to be suffered, and patience must have her perfect work. Chastisement then is a portion peculiar to the family of God, for only those from whom the curse is lifted can be sanctified or have chastisement and affliction as a blessing.

To those who are not of this household affliction is no blessing. It may be made a means of bringing them to Christ and so be blessed to them, but if it does not result in this it is but the forerunner of an affliction and tribulation that shall see no end. They, apart from Christ, are under the curse, and as their person is under it so also is their portion. And not alone are the bitter drops in their cup the fruit of that curse under which they lie; the sweets of life come to them unblessed, for they themselves are unblessed. The lot of the child of God,

however, includes affliction, but affliction appointed for his good, and such affliction as shall never be too heavy for him to bear. It enters into Christ's burden, and that burden is light. Conflict, reproach, shame, spiritual desertion, external afflictions, these all enter into the burden that the Christian is summoned to bear under Christ's yoke, and though this burden includes all it does, He says it is light. The Christian says so too. Not that he has no self-will to contend with, not that there is no fleshly wisdom that would carve out for him another portion; he has these evil principles to reckon with. They make themselves heard, but heard in vain; for the deliberate decision of the true Christian is that Christ's burden is light. Seeing that so much enters into it and yet it is light, the question may arise, that perhaps the way of carrying it contributes to its lightness, and this leads us to consider –

II. – How this burden is borne or is to be borne.

The burden of Christ is borne in His own strength: He sends no one a warfare at his own charges – of those to whom He is righteousness He is strength, and none bear His burden but those that have submitted to Him as the end of the law for righteousness. The purpose of their heart is to go on in strength of God the Lord, and as they go they make mention of His righteousness even of His only. But if the burden is borne in His strength the question may arise, How is His strength communicated to those that enjoy it? and the answer brings before us an important aspect of the life of faith. Faith, that unites the believer to Christ, not only draws him out of himself to Christ as His righteousness, but gives him to lay hold of Christ as his one source of life, health, and strength. The teaching of the Holy Spirit that humbles the believer to receive Christ as His saviour is an abiding influence. The conclusions to which he comes with regard to himself under its influence continue with him. He remains of this mind about himself that he is only a poor sinner and nothing at all, while Jesus Christ is his all in all. Being thus minded he is conscious of his own weakness as well as of his own unworthiness, and this consciousness keeps him from relying on himself for power to perform the task that duty sets before him. Whether that task be to do or to suffer the will of God, he is conscious that only in God's own strength can he be or do or suffer what he is called to. He thus goes a warfare not at his own charges but in reliance upon the grace of Him who has promised, saying, My strength is made perfect in weakness. This reliance on the strengthening grace of God is faith in exercise – by this faith the believer stands, by it he fights, by it he overcomes. His walk is a walk of faith, and faith apprehends revealed truth with regard to the creature's helplessness and the power of Him who is mighty to save.

But this burden is borne not alone in faith, it is borne also in love. Than this there is no stronger impelling force in the spiritual constitution. Love to God in Christ, found in Christ as our reconciled Father in Heaven, reconciles us to His holy will, so that it is sweet to lie passive in His hands and know no will but His. Let the burden that has to be borne but once be recognised to come from His hand and its weight lessens; the more it is recognised to be His burden the easier does the burden become. The livelier the exercise of faith the livelier is that of love, and the more love is in exercise the more readily does the question well up from the gratitude of a broken melted heart – Is there anything too much for me to bear for one who bore so much for me? Is there anything too hard from His hand seeing He has received such unworthy treatment from my hand? Not alone has my treatment of Him been unworthy in the days of my ignorance and death, but alas since I have known Him or rather have been known of Him, how forgetful, how slothful, how worldly, how callous have I been. Should He hide His face for ever and be always wroth, I should have to hold my peace, to put my hand on my mouth, and how much more reconciled to His will should I be when the thought comes that the weeping may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning. He will not be always wroth, and in so dealing with me, good reason have I to yield myself to His will and pray that it may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

But love to God, though most clearly seen and in most vigorous exercise when faith lays triumphant hold of His covenant, is a grace that binds the believer to His Lord, even should His Lord have nothing to do with him. Though He slay me yet will I trust Him, is its language, and irrespective of His goodwill to the individual, His revealed character in His glorious attributes engages their best affections, and His holy sovereignty abases them in the dust with the contrite confession, “We receive less than our iniquities deserve, for to us belong shame and confusion of face, but to Thee belongeth, righteousness.” The burden is borne in love; not however in love alone – there is also patience and long-suffering. A race has to be run, and to run half the race is to lose it. He that endures to the end shall be saved, and only he. Patience is necessary; ye have need of patience, so that after ye have suffered the will of God ye may inherit the promise. He who suffers not reigns not. He who strives not wins not. None are crowned but those that strive lawfully, and lawful striving involves this continuance in well-doing and in suffering the will of God. Faith is needed for the bearing of the burden, so is love, so is patience, and faith, love, and patience conspire together in prayer. The burden of Christ is borne by these four. It may be said that to a certain extent they overlap, yet it is true that they are distinct. Prayer is not love nor is it patience, nor yet is it faith, but faith, patience, and love all go together, and prayer is their expression. It is the expression of faith, for faith goes forth thus to the fulness of Christ’s strength. It is the expression of love too, for love gives familiarity and boldness, and where these are the soul goes forth to the fountain of fulness for supply for its wants. It is the expression of patience too. Patient enduring in the line of duty involves this, that obedience should be given to Him who calls on all men to pray and not to faint, and there can thus be no true patience or watching without prayer. Prayer is the expression or the outgoing of watchful patience. Where there is enduring in the conflict then there is prayer; for the conflict that calls for patience is one waged from first to last in the strength of the Lord of Hosts. It is then by these four that this burden is borne – Faith and Love, Patience and Prayer. We come now to consider in the third place, how it comes about that this burden is light.

III. – The lightness of the burden. Christ’s burden is apportioned by Himself. He is a merciful master and will not suffer His servants to be tried beyond what they can bear. The trial may be severe, but if He inflict with the one hand He upholds with the other. As this is so, the burden never becomes unbearable. Flesh and blood, it is true, may often shudder at the thought of tribulation and affliction, but the servants of Christ have something more to reckon on than the strength that flesh and blood can supply. They are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, forasmuch as the Spirit of Christ dwells in them, and because this is so His own strength fits them for bearing His burden. It is allotted to them by Him who knows what they are and what they are able to bear, and what they need, too, in the way of discipline. He knows the discipline they need, and in His merciful kindness He exercises them with just such trials as are fitted to train them as good soldiers of His cross. Because the burden is His – He appoints it – it cannot be but light, and in the measure in which it is received as His it is realised to be light, for love reconciles to heavy burdens. It annihilates their weight.

But there are two burdens with which the believer’s can be compared, and the comparison proves to him that his present burden is light. When he considers what he is and what he deserves, he sees he deserves a burden of wrath – the wrath of God as his portion. Unbelievers and ungodly men here lie under this burden, and those who have passed beyond the realm of hope have this burden to bear in all its spiritual awfulness. The question arises in the Christian heart – Am I better than they? In no wise, is the answer, and thus the comparison of what he is as justified in Christ Jesus with what he deserves as a sinner that lies under the wrath of God makes whatever he has to endure here but light. When he

considers, further, the many alleviating circumstances that accompany his lot here with the contrast of outer darkness and the bitterness of despair that he might well have as his portion this lightens his burden. Is what I have to bear, he may say, to be spoken of when I deserve God's wrath and to be where many already are who were not such grievous sinners as I have been? This consideration makes his burden light.

There is another comparison however. There is a far more exceeding, yea an eternal weight of glory, in view of which Paul could speak of our *light* affliction which is but for a moment. He tells us himself some of his sufferings for the furtherance of Christ's cause and kingdom, yet they were all included under the term of our light affliction. It was affliction, but it was light. Because of the recompense of reward, an eternal weight of glory, the affliction however severe in its nature or prolonged in its continuance was light affliction. It was not worthy of being spoken of in comparison with the reward of the inheritance. Compare the two, and the present burden becomes no burden, because of the exceeding weight of glory. The weight of glory too is wholly of grace, is wholly undeserved; the burden of affliction is altogether less than what its bearer deserves. Compare these things and admit that Christ's burden is light. Compare again the affliction that is but for a moment, with the eternal weight of glory and admit the truth of Christ's word – My burden is light. The glory would be an unbearable burden, if it were not that those who shall bear it shall be fitted for it and sustained under it. Worthy Robert Finlayson, speaking of this weight of glory as the element of the child of God, compared it to the weight of water that lies over the fish deep down in the depths of the sea. The weight of water is there, but is felt to be no burden. It is the fishes' native element, and it serves but to add to the comfort or ease of the fish. So with regard to the weight of glory. However heavy in itself it will not be unsupportable. It will be the saints' native element. In Christ he is quite entitled to it all, and by the Spirit he is prepared for its enjoyment, so that the strong heaped-up language of the apostle does not refer to anything that will prove a discomfort, but to what will be the very joy and rejoicing of the ransomed of the Lord. There are then the two burdens: here, the burden of affliction which is light in many ways, there, the burden of glory. Compare the two and you must admit that Christ's word speaks truth when it says – My burden is light.

But if Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light, why do those that name His name ever complain? There are complaints and complaints. Some arise from weak flesh and blood, others are the fruit of the Spirit's inworking. There are complaints against Christ and complaints directed to Him. While the children of God are here they are imperfect, and their complaints and murmurings against the Lord and His appointments arise from their imperfection. If they were as they should be, if they were as they would be, there would be no such complaints. But their other complaints are not against the Lord but against themselves: their complaint includes this – they complain to Him of their own complaining spirit against Him. As children of God they complain of themselves and of the world to Him, but the flesh complains to the world of Him and His ways. If they had their own way they should never complain of Him, and their complaints to Him would be heard most of all by Himself alone. Complaining however as they are, they are one and all prepared to admit that His burden is light, and they mourn that their admission of this is so cold and half-hearted. In all things they come short, and all things include not alone a heartily submissive spirit to endure what He is pleased to appoint, but a heartily open frank spirit in confessing the truth of His word that His burden is light. The burden of the wicked may at times seem light, but it only seems light. Two things go to make it seem light, a forgetfulness of their present awful state as under the desolating curse of God, and a forgetfulness of their prospects of bearing the unmitigated burden of that curse throughout an undone eternity. Remember these two things which are so often forgotten, and compare

Christ's burden borne by His people with the wicked's burden borne by themselves and you must acknowledge the truth of this word – My burden is light.

The church of God says; His burden is light. The redeemed above say that it was light. Christ says to all ages, and challenges contradiction – My burden is light, and will you venture to say that His burden is not light? Oh, friend, seek that this burden may be on your own shoulders, come under Christ's yoke and you will bear His burden, and bearing His burden you will have indeed to say with the thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, "His yoke indeed is easy, His burden indeed is light."

[February 1900]

Notes of a Sermon

By the Rev. DONALD MACFARLANE, Raasay.

"Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering" – Leviticus 16:3.

In this chapter we have an account of the day of atonement. That day was a great day in Israel. It was a day of glad tidings. There is but one way of salvation – through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The death of Christ, as the ground of salvation, was set forth in all the bloody sacrifices of the Old Testament, and more particularly on the day of atonement, which was observed once a year – on the tenth day of the seventh month. The Apostle Paul tells us that the Gospel was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness (Hebrews 4:2), the same Gospel, in substance, that is preached to us now. Let us see how the Gospel was preached to them on the day of atonement, and, for this purpose, let us notice four things: –

I. The person who officiated that day.

- II. The work which he performed.
- III. That which was accomplished by his work, and
- IV. The blessing that was bestowed on the people as the result of his work.

I. First: the person who officiated on the day of atonement. The high priest alone – “Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place.” The other priests officiated on other days, but this day they are all out of sight. None must enter the tabernacle but the high priest to do the work of the day. All the priests are swallowed up in one. This taught the people that, in the fulness of the times, there would be but one priest – Christ – the great High Priest of the New Testament Church. The legal priesthood is forever abolished by the priesthood of Christ. It taught them also, in that typical dispensation, that they were to look to Christ alone for salvation. We find no authority in all the New Testament Scriptures for the name *priest*, in the official sense, to be applied now to any but to Christ – the only priest of the Church of God. The high priest represented Christ, who alone began and finished the work of redemption, and then were none of the people with him. He was a type of Christ, not only as he did the work of the day *alone*, but also in the *manner* in which he began the work. Let us notice the manner in which he began the service of the day. He began his work attired, not in the glorious garment which was peculiar to him as the high priest, but mainly in the garment of the common priest. Thus Christ veiled His glory by the assumption of human nature. Before beginning the work of our redemption, He took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet there was no sin in Him, He knew no sin in that sense. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. This was taught in type on the day of atonement, by the fact that the high priest washed his body and clothed himself with a *white linen* garment. Christ was so holy that even the type would require to be washed to foreshadow His perfect purity. Such an high priest became us. His human nature was, and is, without sin, as was represented by the white linen garment of the high priest under the law.

But, although the high priest appeared in the garment of the common priest, yet he had on him something that distinguished him from the other priests. He wore a crown on his head. In like manner, though Christ assumed our nature and humbled Himself in that nature, yet the glory of His divine person shone forth in “the days of his flesh” in such a manner as bespoke Him to be the Son of God, the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of His person. “We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten Son of the Father.” The glory of His Godhead might also be seen, and was seen, in the miracles which He performed – miracles which none could do but God.

II. Secondly: his work. His work was to offer sacrifice. He offered sacrifice (1) for himself and his house, the other priests, (2) for the people. For himself and his house he offered two kinds of sacrifices – a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. For the people he offered two kids of the goats for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. The burnt-offering was the daily sacrifice, which was offered morning and evening, in room of which we have now family worship, which ought to be observed daily, morning and evening. The sin-offering was the yearly sacrifice. On the great day of atonement the first sacrifice offered was the sin-offering, representing the atonement of Christ, and then followed the burnt-offering, which represented the worship of the Church. We must be reconciled to God before we can worship Him with acceptance; our persons must be accepted in the Beloved before our worship can be accepted. This was taught in type on the day of atonement.

The sin-offering, by which atonement was made, was offered but *once* in the year; the burnt-offering, typifying worship, was offered every day. Christ made atonement by his death once for all, never to be repeated; but the worship of God is to continue for ever. The fact that

there was blood in the burnt-offering taught that in all our approaches to God in worship, in private and in public, we must come on the ground of the blood of Christ. We need that blood in the closet, at the family altar, and in the public sanctuary. We have access to God by Christ.

The high priest killed the creature to be sacrificed before he offered it. Christ is now our great High Priest, the sacrifice, and the altar. The high priest did not offer himself, but another creature, but Christ's sacrifice was Himself. He, as priest, laid down His life for the sheep, and offered up Himself to God as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of them all. The high priest used an instrument to kill the victim. There were instruments used in the death of Christ, though it was Himself that laid down His life. He had power to lay it down, and power to take it again. As the creature appointed for sacrifice was slain, burnt on the altar, and without the camp, so was Christ put to death, and He underwent the fire of God's wrath, but, unlike the type, He was not consumed. As a certain divine put it – "Christ went through death alive," for he was more than a mere man; He was the eternal Jehovah. After the high priest had finished the work of offering sacrifice for himself and his house, he had to offer sacrifice for the congregation of Israel. Two kids of the goats were appointed – one to be slain to make atonement, the other to be set free. Which of the two was to be slain, and which to be set free, was to be decided by lot. Both kids were to be brought to the door of the tabernacle, and lots were cast. This was a very solemn transaction. Christ and the elect were put, as it were, in the balances. Which of them is to suffer the penalty of sin, and which is to be set free? The Lord knew from all eternity, but the matter is to be made known to men now by casting lots. The lot fell on Christ to suffer the punishment of sin – represented by the kid for the Lord; the lot to go free fell on those for whom Christ died – represented by the scapegoat. The death of Christ is the deliverance of His people. So He said, "If ye seek Me, let these go their way."

It is to be observed that nothing of the sin-offering was to be eaten; all must be consumed by fire. A part of other sacrifices might be eaten by the offerer and his friends, but this offering must all, except the blood, which was carried into the presence of God in the most holy place, be burnt with fire. This was significant and instructive. The sin-offering, more than any other sacrifice, typified Christ's atoning sacrifice. The law required all His passive obedience as well as His active obedience. The mouth of the law must be filled before the mouth of the sinner, who cries for mercy, be filled. There are two parties who have their mouths wide open crying to be filled by God – the law, on the one hand, crying for satisfaction, and the whole elect of God on the other hand, crying for mercy. To whom will the Judge of all listen first? Not to the elect, but to the law. He says, in effect, to the elect – "Stand you by for a while, your turn has not yet come, wait with patience till I satisfy the law; I will give it my eternally begotten Son; *that* will satisfy it. And then you may open your mouth wide, and I will fill it till you are as satisfied as my law is. I will give you what satisfied my law, I will give you my beloved Son. What do you need more? In Him all fulness dwells." The Old Testament Church saw, in type, the law satisfied before they obtained eternal life. Abel saw it; all the rest saw it, and it was seen more particularly on the great day of atonement. The sinner, who now hungers and thirsts after peace with God, must see the law satisfied by the death of Christ before he can obtain that peace which he needs and desires. "Look unto Me," Christ says, "and be ye saved."

The second part of the high priest's work on the day of atonement was to burn incense, and to enter into the most holy place in the smoke of the incense, carrying the blood of the sacrifice with him. Incense was a type of prayer, and in the case of the high priest, it was a type of the intercession of Christ. The incense was burnt on the golden altar that stood before the vail, that separated the most holy place from the holy place, by fire taken from the brazen

altar, on which the sacrifice was offered. In conformity to the type, Christ, after He had offered Himself to satisfy divine justice, entered into heaven in the smoke of His intercession. As the high priest burned incense before he entered into the presence of God, so Christ began His work of intercession on earth (John 17), which He continues in heaven. He intercedes on the ground of the atonement He made on earth. By His death He secured the blessings of salvation for His people; by His intercession He obtains these blessings for them. "He was delivered for our offences; He was raised again for our justification." Christ entered into heaven immediately after He laid down His life. Some say that He did not. But, besides other evidences that He did, the fact that the high priest, who was a type of Christ, entered into the holiest of all immediately after he had offered the sacrifice and burnt incense, is a sufficient proof. It would be death for him to stay for any time on the way between the holy place and the most holy. He entered within the veil at once, and so did Christ.

The blood of the sacrifice was carried into the most holy place, and sprinkled seven times before the mercy-seat. The bringing in of the blood signified that Christ was in due time to enter heaven, carrying with Him, not His literal blood, but the merits of His death – presenting Himself there in the presence of His Father on behalf of His people. The sprinkling of the blood seven times on and before the mercy-seat typified the perfection of the atonement made by Christ. The number *seven* is often used in Scripture to signify *completeness*, or a perfect period of time when applied to time. Many instances might be given if it were necessary.

III. Thirdly: that which was accomplished by the work of the high priest. Atonement was made for sin, reconciliation was effected. This was done typically on the day of atonement; but Christ made a real atonement by His death, and God was in Him reconciling the world unto Himself. "He who knew no sin was made a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Much blood was shed for about 4000 years, but reconciliation was not effected till Christ shed his blood. But the reconciliation which He was to accomplish by the shedding of His blood, was set forth, by types and shadows during that long period, to instruct the people that salvation was by the death of Christ, and not by the work of man. The Old Testament believers obtained salvation on the credit of what Christ, their surety, was to accomplish by His death on the cross, and not by any works of righteousness which they had done.

IV. Fourthly: the blessing that was bestowed on the people as the result of the work of the high priest. Remission of sins was bestowed on them. This was typified by the scapegoat, sent into the wilderness bearing their sins. The sins of all – priests and people – were confessed by the high priest on the head of the goat, and then the creature bearing their sins was sent by the hand of a fit person into the wilderness, far away from the camp of Israel. Pardon of sins is a putting them far away from us – "as far as the east is from the west," and infinitely farther. In the eye of the law, Christ put away the sins of His people by the sacrifice of Himself; in justification, their sins are put away by forgiveness, wherein the guilt of sin is removed far from them, so that it shall never meet them again to condemn them.

"O blessed is the man to whom
Is freely pardoned,
All the transgression he hath done,
Whose sin is covered"

Psalm 32:1.

On the day of atonement, this was the blessing not of a few, but of many. The high priest and the other priests shared in it; all the congregation of Israel were blessed with this blessing. While we thus speak we keep in view that the transactions of the great day of atonement were typical. So also were the people of Israel. All for whom Christ died, for whom He made

atonement by His death, shall receive the forgiveness of sins. There were some of these in that congregation. They obtained forgiveness on the ground of the sacrifice of Christ typified; others were only ceremonially cleansed. "The blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin." It required the blood of Christ. On the ground of His blood, the blessing of forgiveness may be obtained by the chief of sinners.

The people were to afflict their souls on the day of atonement. Repentance is connected with remission of sins (Luke 24:47), and those who repent have been convinced by the Holy Spirit of their sins. Repentance does not merit forgiveness, but it prepares the subjects of it for that blessing, and is, in one aspect of it, an effect of faith in Christ (Zechariah 12:10).

In conclusion: we may see in the transactions of the day of atonement the following things, represented to us in types and shadows: –

(1) The part the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit took respectively in the work of salvation. As it was God who appointed Aaron to make atonement for the sins of the people, it was God the Father who sent His Son into the world to make atonement for the sins of those given Him in the everlasting covenant. In the fulness of the times, Christ, the Son of God, came and expiated the sins of His people by the sacrifice of Himself; and the Holy Spirit works in them faith and repentance, and applies the redemption purchased by Christ.

(2) The preaching of the Gospel. No one who understands the ceremonial law can fail to see that the Gospel was preached to the people on the day of atonement. Jesus Christ and Him crucified was set forth that day in an eminent manner, though it was only those possessed of saving faith who could behold Him as "the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world." Others rested in the outward type, as many do now when Christ is set before them in a more clear revelation. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

(3) The insufficiency of the typical sacrifices to take away sin. This was shown by their repetition from year to year till Christ came. They were but a shadow of good things to come (Hebrews 10). Not only that imperfection, marked the sacrifices, but Aaron himself was reminded of his imperfection by the fact that he had to offer an atoning sacrifice for himself as for the people. Christ did not need to do this, for He was perfectly holy. A priest who had sin might, and did, by the authority of God, offer typical sacrifices, but none could offer Christ, the real sacrifice, but Himself. Therefore it is blasphemy for men to try to offer Him up as a sacrifice, as they profess to do in the Romish Church. He did this once Himself, and that "in the days of His flesh." And as these days cannot be brought back, so the offering up of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice cannot be repeated.

(4) The vicarious sacrifice of Christ, who suffered the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. It was not the creatures that sinned that were slain to atone for sin, but another creature that never sinned. The sufferings of one creature were accepted (typically) for the sufferings of all the people. This pointed clearly to Christ, who took the place of His people under the law, and satisfied the law for them, so as to make atonement for many (Romans 5:19).

(5) Deliverance from sin vouchsafed to all the people of God on the ground of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, offered once for all. All their sins, as to the guilt of them, were imputed to Christ, laid on Him. And He, having endured the penalty required by the law, they shall be saved from their sins – (1) by justification, wherein God pardons all their sins – that is, He acquits them from all their guilt (Romans 8:33), and (2) by regeneration and sanctification, wherein their whole nature – their whole person, soul and body – is purified from the depravity of sin (Titus 3:5). Justification is a change of state; regeneration, a change of nature. The latter is the ground-work of sanctification, which is a progressive work

completed, as respects the soul at death, and with respect to the body at the resurrection. All this was exhibited in type on the great day of atonement.

The typical atonement has been superseded by the death of Christ. Christ is now our priest, sacrifice, and altar. He cried on the cross, "It is finished." The law is satisfied, God is glorified, and there is a new and a living way opened for us by the death of Christ to enter into a state of reconciliation with God. Christ is our sin-offering (2 Corinthians 5:21). The antitype, having come and made an end of sin, and having brought in everlasting righteousness, there is no further need of the type. All the representative priests have given place to one person, Christ. All atoning sacrifices disappeared when the great High Priest of the New Testament Church offered Himself on Calvary. Let believers rejoice in this; let sinners be encouraged to come to God, through Christ; and let God have the glory. Amen.

[March 1900]

A Sermon.

By the Rev. JAMES S. SINCLAIR, John Knox's, Glasgow.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" – Hebrews 11:24-26.

These words form a part of one of the most eloquent and impressive chapters in the New Testament. The apostle begins the chapter with a definition of faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," and then proceeds to recount the names and deeds of "the elders," the saints of Old Testament times, who by faith obtained a good report. He reminds his readers of these excellent worthies, and the wonderful deeds they performed, not in order to exalt the merit and might of fallen men, but to show that they did all they did in a strength not their own, a strength derived by faith from the God of their salvation. He thus stimulates and encourages the Hebrews who had made a profession of Christ, and had suffered much from the opposition of their brethren, to pursue their course with faith and patience, knowing that instead of being disassociated from the line of their glorious ancestors, they were treading in their footsteps, and following them to "the better country."

The special example of faith to which we call your attention at present is that of Moses, the man of God. This illustrious person is one of the noblest figures in the history of the Church under the old dispensation. His whole life from his birth to his death is full of remarkable interest, and is exceedingly rich in spiritual instruction for the Church in subsequent ages. Our attention is here chiefly directed to Moses at a critical period in his history, a period that on a lesser scale comes to many of us when we must make the choice that oftentimes determines our prospects for time and eternity. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." "If the Lord be God follow him, but if Baal, then follow him."

I. – "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Moses was born in Egypt during the time of the great oppression. His parents were true believers in the God of Israel, and not fearing the wrath of the king, who had commanded that every male child of Israel should be slain, they hid their babe three months. They were the more encouraged to do this, as "they saw he was a proper child;" they discerned something unusually prepossessing in his countenance. He was, as Stephen says in Acts 7:20, "exceeding fair," or in other words, "fair to God." When he could no longer be hid, they committed him in a little ark of bulrushes to the waters of the Nile, believing that the same gracious God who had taken care of him in the past, would protect him in the future. Here he was found by Pharaoh's daughter who adopted him as her own child and called him Moses, which means "drawn out." It was in this remarkable way that Moses found himself under the charge of this Egyptian princess when he was come to years.

There is a sense in which every true believer finds himself, to begin with, a son of Pharaoh's daughter. Egypt may be taken to signify the lost estate of mankind; Pharaoh, the king, Satan, the god of this world, who holds men in spiritual bondage; and Pharaoh's daughter, the world itself, under the power of which all men are by nature. But the time comes when a distinction is made between the children of promise and others. The former are awakened by the Spirit to realise their lost estate; to seek deliverance from Satan and the world; and so they are taken out of their guilt and bondage, and made new creatures in Christ Jesus. At length they make a public profession of Christ, and refuse any longer to be under the influence or bear the name of Pharaoh's daughter, the world. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

We cannot say exactly when Moses became a partaker of the saving faith of God's elect. He may have been regenerated (though by no means perfected) from the womb, as the words which Stephen uses in regard to him as a child, namely, "fair to God," would almost seem to indicate. One thing is certain that he needed to get faith as well as others from God Himself. There is no difference in this respect: "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and Moses was by nature a child of wrath, even as others. Faith did not come to him more than to others by natural generation, but by spiritual regeneration. Moreover, his pre-eminent natural endowments did not produce it, nor could they make up for the want of it, if he had it not. If he had not been made an heir of faith by grace, we would probably have never heard of him as anything but a man of learning and power among the Egyptians. He got faith however, and that in no ordinary degree, and his faith showed itself most conspicuously at the very time it was most required. This is a very sure mark of the faith of God's people. Some are very strong believers when they are in calm weather, and in no temptation or trouble, but when the wind begins to blow and the storm begins to rise, their faith vanishes like chaff. Moses was brought into circumstances that tested his faith to the uttermost. He was known as a Hebrew from his infancy, and probably got considerable liberty in respect of his peculiar inclinations and views until he came to years of manhood; but the period then arrived when he must accept of his own free accord the position of the son of Pharaoh's daughter, or forego

it for ever. "By faith he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." There was here presented for his acceptance one of the highest honours Egypt could bestow; the throne of Egypt was, in all probability, before him, along with all the earthly power and glory attaching to it. But he refused it all. What was it that determined his refusal? It was his faith. By faith he had become a believer in the God of Israel; by faith he accepted and rejoiced in the record of the Lord's past dealings and future purposes towards His chosen people. By faith, therefore, he had become a son of God, and to enjoy this glorious privilege, was infinitely more to him than to be a son of the most exalted monarch this world could boast. Moses then refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, because he had become a son of the Lord God of Israel. Pharaoh's daughter had no doubt been very kind to him, cherishing him from his infancy, and showering many favours upon him, but all this was not sufficient to allure him from the path of duty in the hour of trial. To have continued in her house would have involved complicity in the idolatries and iniquities of Egypt. He could not serve God and mammon, and therefore he chose to serve God.

Let us here notice a contrast between the action of Joseph and that of Moses in somewhat similar circumstances. Joseph, many years before, was, by a chain of mysterious providences, brought into favour with the then Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Pharaoh made him governor over all the land, and he accepted the high office, he did not refuse it. Moses, on the other hand, refused a still higher position in the same country. They were both right in what they did, and yet the actions themselves were quite opposite in character: they were both animated by the same faith, and yet the fruits were different. The reason was that they moulded their conduct, not after the mere suggestion of circumstances, but after the dictates of the revealed will of God. The Lord had made known long before to Abraham that his seed was to sojourn in a strange country, and to be afflicted there for four hundred years, and then to be brought out "with great substance" (Genesis 15:13,14). Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, was sold into Egypt by the ill-will of his brethren. There he was raised to be governor over the land, and was the means of supplying corn to his father and brethren during a period of famine in Canaan. They eventually came down to Egypt, and took up their abode in the province of Goshen. All this was in complete harmony with the purpose and will of God. On the other hand, Moses was raised up about the time the Lord purposed to deliver His people out of this strange country. The time of separation and deliverance was not far off, and therefore if Moses had chosen to identify himself with Egypt, he would have acted directly contrary to the express will of God. But, as a true believer, he made that will his guide, and preferred to act in accordance with it than to accept the highest place in Egypt. This conclusion was not come to so easily as we may think, if we consider all the circumstances. Moses might have said to himself: "Was it not divine providence that brought me here? Have I not been educated and equipped for the exalted position which I may one day fill? Can I not use my present and future influence on behalf of my down-trodden people? May I not in this way glorify God and help His people in a degree that it will be utterly impossible for me to do if I refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and cast in my lot with the despised and persecuted Hebrews?" Reasonings such as these did not deter him from the path of duty. He believed that God had another way of delivering His people than the one suggested, and he chose that way, no matter what trial and suffering he might have to undergo.

The word and the providence of God sometimes seem, as here, to contradict one another. The faith of Moses had respect to the word as the supreme guide at all times, and it is our duty to follow his example in this respect. Events in providence do not constitute our Bible. Many things are permitted in providence that are signs of God's wrath and not of His favour. If we therefore find ourselves in any position in life in which we cannot serve the Lord consistently with His revealed will, then we are to forsake that position. It is not our feelings or reasonings that are to be the rule of faith and conduct, it is the written word of the living

God. And yet many who profess Christ do not seem to understand this. Some, for example, are connected with a religious body that departs from the faith. They refuse to obey the plain command, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate;" they prefer their own reasonings to the voice of God. They argue in the following manner, and say: "I was born and brought up in this Church; I saw it in its best days; God in His providence placed me in a position of influence in it. If I cut my connection with this Church the range of my influence will be lessened, and instead of being of more benefit to the cause of Christ I will be of less; the Egyptians will then have everything their own way. I must stick to this Church to the last." Now this kind of argument seems very plausible, but it is not after the example of Moses. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. The very name he felt it impossible to assume, and therefore stood back from occupying any position that involved dishonour to the Lord God of Israel. It is clear therefore that they who will prove they are on the Lord's side must not do evil that good may come; they must oftentimes, in response to the Lord's call, make choice of obscurity rather than eminence, pain rather than pleasure, poverty rather than riches, and reproach rather than honour. The Lord Jesus says: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall save it" (Luke 9:24).

II. – "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Moses, by faith, had chosen God to be his saviour and portion, and so he made choice of God's people as his people. He said in effect to Israel what Ruth said to Naomi, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God." Moses was prepared to suffer affliction with the people of God. They were at this time a downtrodden and oppressed people, but he saw they had a glorious prospect before them, and he reckoned "the sufferings of the present time as not worthy to be compared with the glory that should be revealed" in them. Faith, "the evidence of things not seen," looked beyond Egypt to the freedom of the wilderness, and the pleasures of the promised land. On the other hand, he saw that the pleasures of Egypt were but sinful pleasures – pleasures under the righteous curse of God, and therefore only destined to last for a season. At the longest they were limited by the bounds of time; in eternity they ceased to be. To the eye of sense, the Egyptians were the happy people as they revelled in the enjoyments of this world; while the Israelites were a poor wretched race, whose lot was to be pitied and deplored. But to the eye of faith, the situation assumed quite a different appearance. Faith takes into its calculations the future as well as the present, eternity as well as time, and thus gives its verdict against the Egyptians and for the children of Israel. In due course the Lord honoured the faith of His servant, and made him the instrument of doing a great work – of securing a deliverance for Israel that was to be commemorated for ever. "Him that honoureth me, I will honour."

In this passage we learn (1) that the true believer makes choice of the people of God as his companions. He forsakes his former worldly associates, for now he finds no pleasure or profit in their society. In fact, it is vain for anyone to say that he is a believer in Christ, if the company of God's people is no attraction to him, and if he is quite at home among the people of the world. (2) The true believer will prefer to be with the Lord's people in sorrow and adversity rather than with others in happiness and prosperity. He knows that the light affliction of the people of God is for a moment and worketh for them "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every one whom he receiveth." The Lord sends a variety of afflictions upon His people, but it is for wise and gracious purposes; He will make everything work together for their good. (3) On the other hand, the true believer will turn away from sin with genuine hatred of it. It has its

pleasures no doubt, but what are these? They are only sweet poison that stupifies the soul in the insensibility of spiritual death, and hastens it on to everlasting perdition. They are at best but for a season; soon they will come to an end; and those who have made a heaven of them here will find them to be a hell hereafter. (4) Many are the afflictions of the righteous in all ages, but especially in times when the Church of God is despised and downtrodden. The righteous have in every age afflictions from the world, the devil, and the flesh. These are constant sources of trouble and sorrow, but it is better to be afflicted by such enemies, than to be in friendly covenant with them. In some ages, such as ours, the afflictions of the people of God are more numerous than ordinary. The profanity, immorality, drunkenness, Sabbath desecration, and other forms of sin in which many indulge are a great affliction to them, while the infidelity, worldliness, and laxity of the professing Church put the bitterest drops of all into their cup. Nevertheless, it is infinitely better to be burdened and grieved with these evils than to embrace them or look lightly on them. (5) The afflictions of the righteous are of short duration, while the afflictions of the wicked are everlasting. The pleasures of the righteous are everlasting, while the pleasures of the wicked are only for a season. Moses realised all this, and chose the lot of the people of God. It would be well for many of us, if we saw things in the same light. We naturally grasp at the shadow and lose the substance; we look with contempt upon the people of God and their troubles, and envy the people of the world and their pleasures; we forget the glorious inheritance that is in store for the former, and the awful hell that awaits the latter; we chose the world rather than Christ, hell rather than heaven. The Rev. Archibald Cook said: "Moses was wise for himself. He saw a little heaven here and a great hell hereafter, and on the other hand, a little hell here, and a great heaven hereafter. He chose the little hell and the great heaven." Herein is true wisdom indeed. The unbeliever thinks he is the wise man, and that those who follow Christ are only fools and fanatics. But the great day will reveal where the folly lies. Happy are they who are now enabled by grace to make choice of Christ and His salvation! The wisdom of their choice will be seen in its full excellency in the day when we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

III. – "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Egypt had abundance of treasures. It was one of the wealthiest nations of antiquity. Riches have always had an attraction for the human race. Men have wasted all the energies of mind and body in pursuit of them. No labour has seemed too hard, nor time too long to employ in the heaping up of wealth. Moses had the prospect of acquiring riches in the high position to which he was invited. He had also the prospect of acquiring them easily; they would form part of the legacy to be left him by Pharaoh's daughter. There was thus opened up before his view a vista of earthly happiness that was fitted to ensnare his heart, and allure him onwards to the enjoyment of it. Further, the consideration of his own people in their poverty and misery might have come in and afforded a nobler reason for the acceptance of the prize that was within his reach. His own pleasure and his people's good might thus have combined to constrain him to make choice of the treasures in Egypt. He saw, however, that these treasures would be too dearly purchased at any price. Egypt had grown great in wickedness; the enjoyment of its wealth would have involved implication in its iniquity. Beyond all this, he knew it to be the will of God that the children of Israel should soon depart from Egypt, and therefore he would accept of nothing that would make it difficult to go along with them. He must obey the Lord, and go forth along with His people let the temporal loss be what it may. He esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

This leads us to notice the person of Christ as here introduced. The very mention of Christ in this connection proves, along with other places, that the apostle lived in the constant realisation that Jesus Christ was the eternal Son of God, God over all blessed for ever, and

that therefore Christ's personal existence was as great a reality under the old dispensation as under the new, though the revelation of it then might not be quite so full and glorious. Christ is here spoken of because, as the angel of the covenant, He followed His people wherever they went. He was in Egypt with them, as surely as in Canaan and in the wilderness. And further, all the hopes and prospects of this people were bound up with their relation to Christ. The Lord had said to Abraham: "In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The hope of Israel, the hope of every pious soul under the old economy, was the coming of the promised seed, the Messiah, the Saviour, the Redeemer of Israel. To be identified with the children of Israel was to be identified with Christ. They were despised and persecuted because they refused to indulge in the idolatries of heathendom, and because they declared their belief in one God over all nations, who was theirs in covenant, and whose presence was alone to be found in their midst. In this way they became obnoxious in the eyes of the Egyptians, and suffered the reproach of Christ, or as it may be translated, reproach for Christ. The promised seed was an occasion of reproach to them; they suffered shame and oppression for His sake. But it was in this same person their present blessedness and future inheritance were bound up, however much hidden this might be from the eye of sense. Moses, by the eye of faith, discerned it all. He had made choice of the covenant God of his fathers as his own, and Christ to him was the hope and salvation of his heart. It was in virtue of the Messiah and his atoning work, prefigured in the bloody sacrifices of this economy, that any true Israelite expected salvation. There was no other way of pardon, and acceptance before God than by the blood of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It is clear, therefore, that Moses, who had made choice of God in Christ for all the blessings of eternal salvation, was also willing to bear any reproach for Christ's sake. What would the treasures of Egypt do for him without Christ? They would only be a millstone to drag his soul down to hell. He certainly needed a little of this world's goods in order to carry him through the wilderness, but He who gave him Christ, was well able to give him this also. And he did not forget that the Lord had promised to bring His people out of Egypt "with great substance." In the promises of God, he found all he required for time and eternity. He weighed the reproach of Christ, – Christ and His reproach – in one scale and the treasures in Egypt in another, and the result was that the Egyptian treasures proved themselves as nothing, yea, less than nothing, and vanity, in comparison with Christ and His reproach. The reproach took nothing away from the value of Christ; it was reckoned as honour when estimated in the balances of God's sanctuary.

Moses in this matter sets a beautiful example before hearers of the Gospel in every age. None of us has had, or will likely ever have, an opportunity of acquiring worldly honour and riches, such as he had. Nevertheless, human nature is so utterly depraved that, we are prone to make choice of the most insignificant bauble in this world, rather than to refuse it for Christ's sake. Many a poor creature thinks more of his horse or cow, his few pounds in the bank, than all the durable riches and righteousness that are to be found in Christ. He shrinks from a little affliction and a little reproach in the matter of following Christ and separating from the world, and realises not the inestimable gain of being on the Lord's side. This proves that nothing less than the implantation of a new nature in the soul will enable one to make a proper choice for eternity. We need to be born of the Spirit, and to have faith in the invitations and promises of the word, and in the person and work of Christ, as the Redeemer of Israel. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

IV. – "For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." By faith Moses took into account in the choice which he made the recompense of the reward. We have already to some extent alluded to this. There is a reward that awaits the people of God. It is not the reward of

any merit of theirs; in themselves they deserve nothing but God's wrath and curse through eternity. But the Lord, according to the riches of His grace, and to show forth the glory of the redemption purchased by His Son, and the excellency of the work of the Spirit as manifested in the heart and life, is pleased to grant a reward to those who will refuse the world and its vanities and pleasures, and make choice of Christ and His afflictions and reproaches. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:23,24). This reward would be a recompense to Moses for all the sufferings and losses he had to endure. It was an "inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." The affliction he bore would be compensated by the happiness he should enjoy hereafter; the loss he now sustained of a temporal kingdom on earth, would be infinitely made up by the possession of an everlasting kingdom above: while all the scorn, obloquy, and reproach he now suffered, would be one day swallowed up in the full enjoyment of the favour of God amid the honour and glory of heaven. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

It is one of the ideas of modern theology that faith should have no respect whatever to rewards and punishments, but no one who believes the Scriptures can entertain this view. This passage, given by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, is a complete confutation of it. Not that rewards and punishments are the chief thing in the eye of faith, but they are facts which faith is called upon to weigh and which arouse and encourage the soul to make choice of Christ and His cross; as it is thus led to realise in some real degree what must be the unspeakable awfulness of the wages of sin in hell on the one hand, and the matchless glory of the reward of eternal life on the other. God in Christ, however, is the supreme object of faith, and the soul who believes in Him sees an infinite excellency and desirableness in God thus revealed, such as constrains the soul to love and serve Him for His own sake. At the same time, the Holy Spirit makes use of hell and heaven as set forth in the Bible as means of bringing souls to consider their latter end, and the importance of a saving interest in Christ; and He thus persuades them to "flee from the wrath to come" to the city of refuge wherein eternal life is to be found.

The subject we have been treating of is well fitted for the consideration of the young and those in prime of life. You are coming to or are at years of discretion. Now is your seed time. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7,8). Moses, when he was come to years, refused the honours, riches, and pleasures of the world; he cast in his lot with the people of God; he chose to undergo afflictions and reproaches for Christ's sake; he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. This is an example to be followed at all cost. Let us seek from the Lord the faith which is His gift that we may believe in Christ and follow Him through good report and evil report. He says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find." He will be as good as His word to them that wait upon Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. But they, who refuse to accept His gracious invitation, and persist in the way of unrighteousness, shall have the wages of iniquity, which is eternal death. May the Lord bless to us His own word!

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